

Altogether, information from terrorists in CIA custody has played a role in the capture or questioning of nearly every senior Al Qaida member or associate detained by the United States and its allies since this program began. Put simply, this program has been one of the most vital tools in our war against the terrorists. It's been invaluable both to America and our allies. Were it not for this program, our intelligence community believes that Al Qaida and its allies would have succeeded in launching another attack against the American homeland. By allowing our intelligence professionals to continue this vital program, this bill will save American lives. And I look forward to signing it into law.

The bill I'm about to sign also provides a way to deliver justice to the terrorists we have captured. In the months after 9/11, I authorized a system of military commissions to try foreign terrorists accused of war crimes. These commissions were similar to those used for trying enemy combatants in the Revolutionary War and the Civil War and World War II. Yet the legality of the system I established was challenged in the court, and the Supreme Court ruled that the military commissions needed to be explicitly authorized by the United States Congress.

And so I asked Congress for that authority, and they have provided it. With the Military Commission Act, the legislative and executive branches have agreed on a system that meets our national security needs. These military commissions will provide a fair trial, in which the accused are presumed innocent, have access to an attorney, and can hear all the evidence against them. These military commissions are lawful; they are fair; and they are necessary.

When I sign this bill into law, we will use these commissions to bring justice to the men believed to have planned the attacks of September the 11th, 2001. We'll also seek to prosecute those believed responsible for the attack on the USS *Cole*, which killed 17 American sailors 6 years ago last week. We will seek to prosecute an operative believed to have been involved in the bombings of the American Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, which killed more than 200 innocent people and wounded 5,000 more. With our actions, we will send a clear message to those

who kill Americans: We will find you, and we will bring you to justice.

Over the past few months, the debate over this bill has been heated, and the questions raised can seem complex. Yet, with the distance of history, the questions will be narrowed and few: Did this generation of Americans take the threat seriously, and did we do what it takes to defeat that threat? Every Member of Congress who voted for this bill has helped our Nation rise to the task that history has given us. Some voted to support this bill even when the majority of their party voted the other way. I thank the legislators who brought this bill to my desk for their conviction, for their vision, and for their resolve.

There is nothing we can do to bring back the men and women lost on September the 11th, 2001. Yet we'll always honor their memory, and we will never forget the way they were taken from us. This Nation will call evil by its name. We will answer brutal murder with patient justice. Those who kill the innocent will be held to account.

With this bill, America reaffirms our determination to win the war on terror. The passage of time will not dull our memory or sap our nerve. We will fight this war with confidence and with clear purpose. We will protect our country and our people. We will work with our friends and allies across the world to defend our way of life. We will leave behind a freer, safer, and more peaceful world for those who follow us.

And now, in memory of the victims of September the 11th, it is my honor to sign the Military Commissions Act of 2006 into law.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:35 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. S. 3930, approved October 17, was assigned Public Law No. 109-366. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Mary E. Peters as Secretary of Transportation *October 17, 2006*

Thank you very much. Good afternoon. We are here to congratulate Mary Peters on

becoming our Nation's 15th Secretary of Transportation.

Mary is a dedicated public servant, an experienced leader, and one of our Nation's most innovative thinker on transportation issues. Mary brings more than two decades of knowledge and skill to her new post. She also brings to her position the love and support of her friends and her family. I want to thank her family for being here, especially Mary's husband, Terry.

I appreciate my Chief of Staff, Josh Bolten, who is here to administer the oath. Presidents can't administer the oath—[laughter]—so I tapped my man, Josh. [Laughter]

I want to thank Maria Cino, who is the Deputy Secretary, Acting Secretary. I thank you for your service and your friendship.

I appreciate my friend Secretary Norm Mineta. I got some other stuff to say about you here in a minute. [Laughter] I do want to thank Rodney Slater for joining us, former Secretary of Transportation, as well as Jim Burnley. Thank you both for coming. I'm proud you're here, and I know Secretary Peters appreciates it as well.

The job of Secretary of Transportation is one of the most important in our Federal Government. The American people rely on the Department of Transportation to maintain a safe, reliable, and efficient transportation system. And the future of our growing economy and changing infrastructure depend on the decisions made by the Secretary that will be put into action by this Department.

The Secretary of Transportation also plays an important role in our Nation's coordinated efforts to guard against terrorist threats to our aircraft, seaports, and infrastructure. For the past 6 years, these responsibilities have been carried out by Norm Mineta, who served our country with distinction, integrity, and dedication. Norm is our Nation's longest serving Secretary of Transportation, and he served at a time of great consequence for our country.

I remember after the attacks of September the 11th, when Norm led the successful effort to bring tens of thousands of passengers aboard commercial aircraft to safe landings. He grounded quite a few planes, including the ones my mom and dad were on. They've

always thanked you for that, Norm. [Laughter]

After Hurricane Katrina, Norm and his team helped quickly repair and reopen the major—area's major highways, airports, seaports, and pipelines. He offered incentive-based contracts and used other innovative ideas, and as a result, the Department of Transportation was to get critical infrastructure in place faster than usual. I want to thank you for your leadership, Norm, and I want to thank you for your lifetime of service to our country, and I wish you all the very best. And I want to remind you, Maria made you look pretty good while you were in office. [Laughter]

Mary Peters is the right person to succeed Norm as the Secretary of Transportation. She worked for several years with Secretary Mineta, and she understands the fine legacy she has to live up to. She also knows firsthand the skills and dedication of the men and women who work here at the Department of Transportation. She's going to be a fine boss. She understands that to maintain our Nation's competitiveness and to sustain our growing economy, we need a Secretary who can see the challenges and be willing to confront them.

Mary Peters will provide strong leadership. She has spent a lifetime working on transportation issues in both the private and public sectors. Most recently, she has served as senior executive for transportation policy at a major engineering firm. For 4 years before that, she led the Federal Highway Administration. Before coming to Washington, she served in the Arizona Department of Transportation. For more than 15 years, she rose through the ranks to become director in 1998.

At both the State and Federal level, Mary Peters has worked to improve safety and security on roads and bridges. She's worked to reduce traffic congestion and modernize America's transportation infrastructure. As Secretary of Transportation, Mary will work closely with Federal, State, and local leaders to ensure that America has a state-of-the-art transportation system so that we can meet the needs of our growing economy.

In her new position, she will face important challenges. Next year she will lead the

Department's efforts to reauthorize our Nation's aviation programs. Our Nation is outgrowing our aviation capacity. More people are flying every year, and so we must modernize our airports and our air traffic control.

We also face the challenges of reducing congestion in our surface and maritime transportation systems. To accomplish these tasks, America needs creative thinking and innovative solutions, and I believe Mary Peters will provide them.

As Mary works to build a better transportation system, she will be a careful steward of the people's money. She brings to her new position a reputation for fiscal discipline and integrity. As head of the Federal Highway Administration, Mary introduced better fiscal oversight and accountability. She improved management for the largest transportation projects. She worked closely with her department's inspector general to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse. She's going to carry this kind of diligence into her new job.

She understands the importance of a modern infrastructure and good management. And I'm pleased she has agreed to serve her country once again. As she takes on this important position, she has my full trust and my confidence. Mary, I look forward to working with you as the new Secretary of Transportation. Congratulations.

It's now my honor to witness the swearing-in of Mary Peters.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:16 p.m. at the Department of Transportation. In his remarks, he referred to Terryl "Terry" Peters, Sr., husband of Secretary of Transportation Peters; and former Secretary of Transportation James H. Burnley IV. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary Peters.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Ivo Sanader of Croatia

October 17, 2006

President Bush. It's been my honor to welcome the Prime Minister of Croatia here. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome.

Prime Minister Sanader. Thank you very much.

President Bush. We just had a very lengthy and interesting discussion, which is what you would expect friends to do. I consider the Prime Minister a friend; I consider Croatia a friend as well.

We talked about foreign policy issues, issues of peace. I thank the people of Croatia for their support in Afghanistan of the young democracy. I also believe it's in the world's interest that Croatia join NATO as well as the European Union. And to that end, when I go to Riga, I will make the case that Croatia should be admitted. It seems like a reasonable date would be 2008.

We talked about bilateral relations. We talked about investments, investment opportunities in Croatia. We talked about the need to enhance trade and commerce. The Prime Minister has invited me to come. I've heard unbelievably great things about your country, Mr. Prime Minister. I hear it's one of the most beautiful places on the face of the Earth. I'd love to come sometime. I've got to clear it first with my wife. [Laughter]

But nevertheless, all in all, it's been a very good meeting. And I welcome you here, and thank you for coming.

Prime Minister Sanader. Thank you, Mr. President. I've been touched by the warmth of this reception during this visit and of the interest and understanding you have shown in Croatia and the challenges facing Europe today.

About the only question we disagreed was whether Croatia or the United States had the most beautiful coastline.

President Bush. That's right. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Sanader. I will let you and Mrs. Bush judge for yourselves when you visit Croatia, where you certainly will be most welcome, Mr. President.

The President and I, we discussed a range of issues of bilateral concerns, especially of the preparations of my country to join EU and NATO. And I expressed my gratitude to the President for his constant support for Croatia on its way.

I also—we discussed a range of issues of—regarding our region of southeastern Europe: final status of Kosovo; Georgia; Ukraine; Moldova. We are very active. Croatia is not forgetting that we are in the region